

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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FOR: IBS IOR IPS, CINCPAC FOR USICA ADVISOR

EO 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: PANAMA CANAL TREATY MEDIA REACTION

1. THE CHRISTCHURCH "PRESS", APRIL 22 COMMENTED IN ITS EDITORIAL "THE PANAMA CANAL TREATIES."
2. "THE AMERICAN SENATE'S RATIFICATION OF THE SECOND TREATY TO HAND OVER THE PANAMA CANAL TO PANAMA BY THE END OF THE CENTURY SHOULD ALLEVIATE THE TENSION WHICH HAD BEEN BUILDING UP OVER THE ISSUE AND THREATENED SOON TO BOIL OVER, AS IT DID IN RIOTS IN PANAMA IN 1964. AMERICAN RELATIONS WITH CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA SHOULD BE IMPROVED BY THE REMOVAL OF WHAT SOME SAW AS A CONTINUING COLONIAL SITUATION. PRESIDENT CARTER, WHOSE STANDING WAS AT STAKE OVER RATIFICATION, WAS WELL PLEASED - A PLEASURE ALL THE MORE UNDERSTANDABLE BECAUSE HE FELT IT DEFUSED A SITUATION IN WHICH HE FEARED HE MIGHT HAVE HAD TO DEPLOY TROOPS TO DEFEND THE CANAL AGAINST PANAMANIAN DEMONSTRATORS.
3. "THE SENATE RATIFIED THE SECOND TREATY BY THE

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PAGE 02 WELLIN 02095 260708Z

NARROWEST OF MARGINS - ONE MORE VOTE THAN THE MINIMUM OF TWO-THIRDS. AMERICAN MISGIVINGS HAVE BEEN OBVIOUS. WITHOUT A DOUBT AMERICAN SECURITY AND COMMERCIAL INTERESTS ARE AT STAKE AND THE UNITED STATES WILL KEEP A WARY EYE ON ALL DEVELOPMENTS LIKELY TO AFFECT PANAMA AND THE CANAL. BESIDES THESE, SOME SENATORS HAVE SHOWN THAT THEY DOUBT PANAMA'S ABILITY TO RUN THE CANAL EFFICIENTLY - AN

ATTITUDE WHICH SMACKS OF COLONIALISM. PANAMA DEMANDS THE RIGHT TO MAKE ITS OWN MISTAKES - OR PROVIDE DEMONSTRATIONS OF EFFICIENCY. THE SENATE DID WELL TO RATIFY THE TREATIES.

4. "NEW ZEALAND HAS A MAJOR INTEREST IN THE STABILITY AND EFFICIENCY OF THE PANAMA CANAL. MOST OF NEW ZEALAND'S TRADE TO AND FROM EUROPE GOES THROUGH THE CANAL. THE NEW TREATIES WILL BRING NEW ZEALAND INTO MUCH CLOSER TOUCH, IN TIME, WITH THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT. HAD DISRUPTIONS IN THE CANAL AREA OCCURRED - AND THE CANAL IS VERY VULNERABLE TO ATTACK BY EVEN A SMALL NUMBER OF PEOPLE - NEW ZEALAND'S TRADE MIGHT HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BADLY. NOW THAT THE TREATIES HAVE BEEN SIGNED AND RATIFIED, THIS COUNTRY SHOULD BE ABLE TO LOOK FORWARD TO SOUND AND SAFE ADMINISTRATION AND A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH PANAMA."
ANDERSON

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